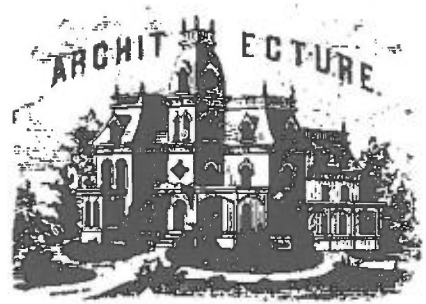


# A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine

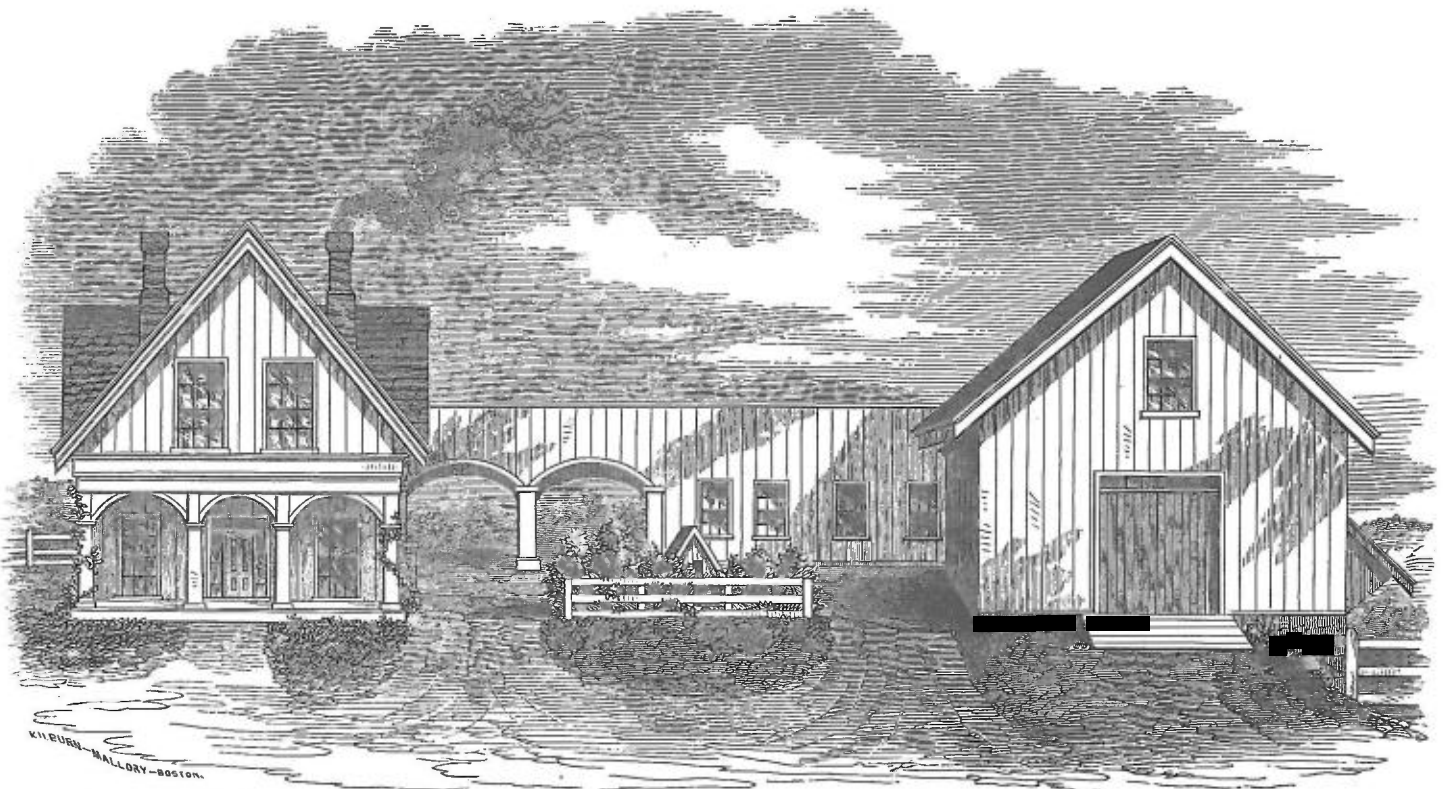


## Pamelia A. Case 1830-1911

Women no doubt made known their thoughts about floor plans when earlier homes were built, but an expansion of publishing in the middle decades of the nineteenth century enabled some of them to get their ideas into print and to become amateur architects. In particular, farm-oriented newspapers and magazines published ideas for efficient farms and farmhouses and encouraged both farmers and their wives to submit original designs.<sup>1</sup> Among the resulting proposals was a farmstead planned by a young Kenduskeag, Maine woman.

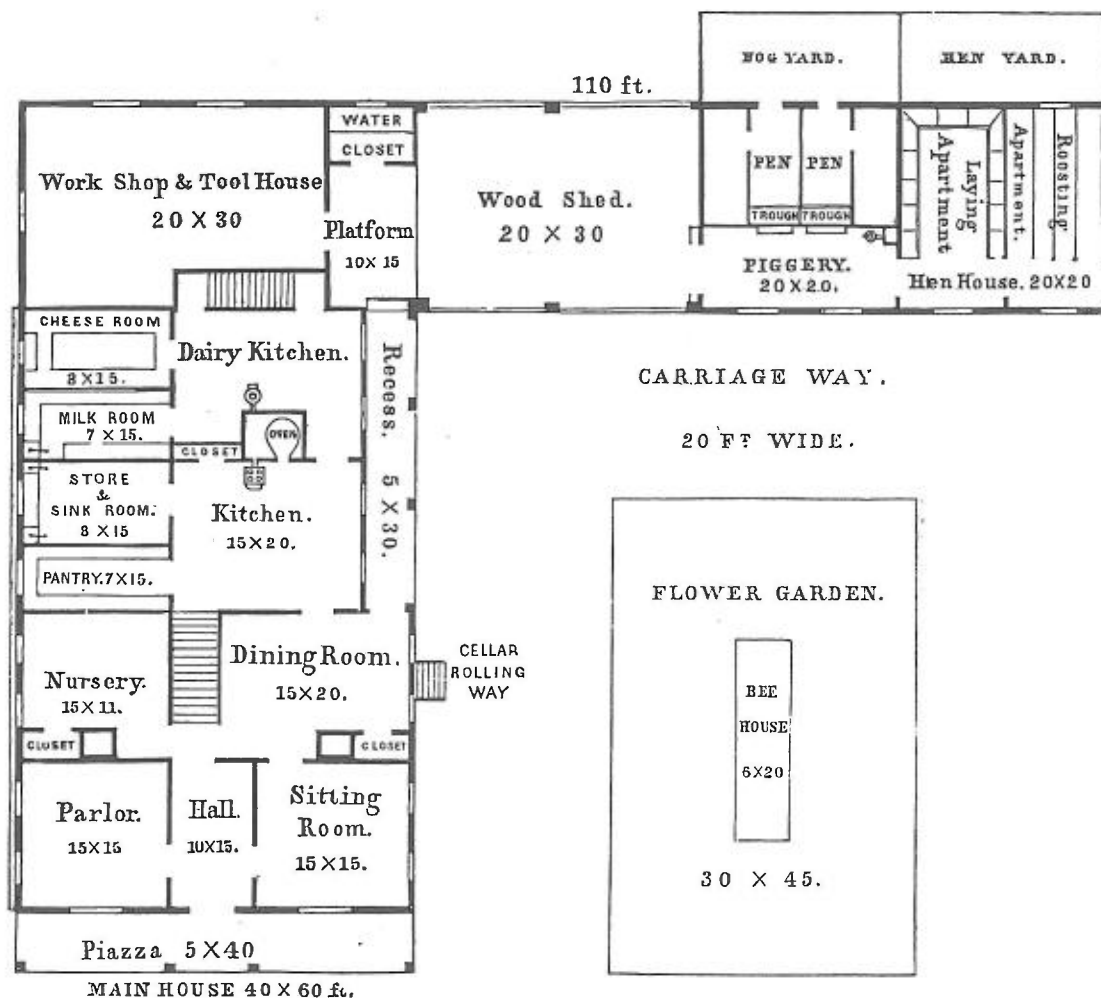
Pamelia Case was born Pamela Augusta Gilman on September 4, 1830, in Bangor, the second of the ten children of Lydia and Stephen Gilman. A furniture joiner by trade, Stephen also worked as a builder and an architect and was for a time in partnership with architect Charles G. Bryant. Because of the role he took in civic affairs,<sup>2</sup> and because his family included men of education, it is to be presumed that Stephen Gilman sent his children to local schools. Bangor then provided secondary-level opportunities for both males and females,<sup>3</sup> although no records remain to prove which girls graduated before 1851. Whether she was formally educated or not, an interest in architecture must have come naturally to Pamela because of her father's business.

An acquaintance with farm needs came after her



**VIEW OF MODEL FARM BUILDINGS FOR A MAINE FARMER. By a Maine farmer's wife.**

[For Plans and Descriptions see page 36.]



**Plan of Model Farm Buildings for a Maine Farmer.**  
[For description see page 36.]

Figure 2. Plate from *Abstract of Returns from the Agricultural Societies of Maine, 1857, Augusta, 1858* (MHPC).

marriage in December of 1852 to Isaac Winslow Case of Kenduskeag.<sup>4</sup> Case had begun legal studies in Ohio after finishing Bowdoin College, but family pressures had brought him back to his home town to manage the farm of his father, the local doctor. He made use of his education by teaching school during the winter months; and, although a daughter later wrote of his preparing boys for college by dint of his expertise in Latin and Greek, college alumni records listed Isaac W. Case as a teacher of agriculture.<sup>5</sup> Whether he taught in that field or merely made it his occupation, a progressive farmer would have subscribed to agricultural publications of the type which printed suggestions about farm homes, and an eager bride would have read them.

The young couple lived in a wing added to the Case family farmhouse, making possible on-the-job training to educate the city girl in rural ways. With

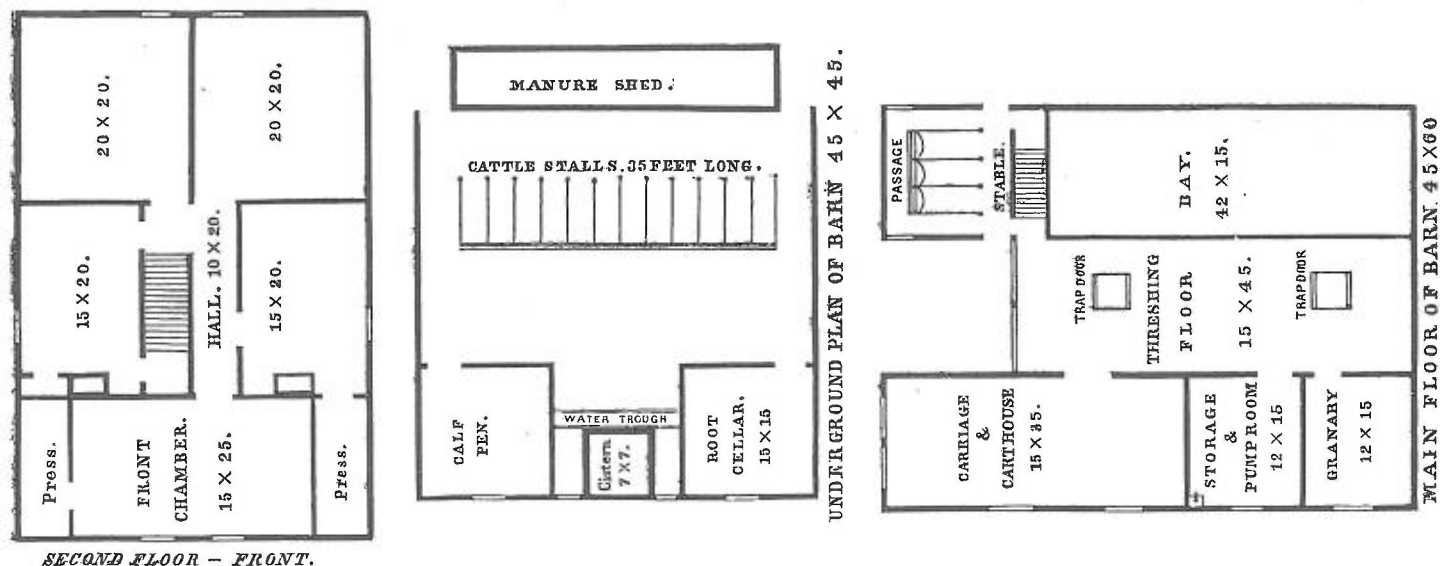
tutelage from her mother-in-law, as well as from her husband and his sister, Pamela Case must soon have learned what was expected of a farmer's wife. It is not surprising that she also indulged in dreams about desirable features for a house of her own. When time permitted, she put her favorite ideas down on paper.

Her proposals for "Model Farm Buildings for a Maine Farmer" were printed in 1858 in a collection of reports from Maine's agricultural societies, published in combination with the second annual report of the secretary of the State Board of Agriculture. An elevation of the farmstead served as a frontispiece for the second half of the volume, while the floor plans, together with Mrs. Case's comments, appeared in the text (Figures 1, 2, 3). Her design, she said, was planned for "mod-

erate sized farms, devoted to the usual 'mixed husbandry.'"<sup>6</sup>

The drawing showed a cross-gabled, story-and-a-half cottage described as "in the plain Gothic style," although except for tall decorative chimneys piercing a steeply pitched roof, the only element of that style lay in a vertically boarded exterior, possibly meant to be board-and-batten. The front doorway with sidelights and heavy entablature were typical of the slightly earlier Greek Revival mode, while the elliptical arches located across that porch and repeated in the woodshed's openings were suggestive of the Federal style. Whether despite or because of the mix of styles, it was an attractive set of buildings, but appearance was secondary to utility in Mrs. Case's commentary.

The interior was "arranged for the comfort of the farmer's family, where the house and dairy work is



### Plan of Model Farm Buildings for a Maine Farmer.

[For description see page 36.]

Figure 3. Plate from *Abstract of Returns from the Agricultural Societies of Maine, 1857, Augusta, 1858* (MHPC).

usually done by the wife and daughters.” Plans for “the most important part of the farm house” included a milk room, cheese room, and dairy kitchen, located just beyond the kitchen, with stairs for easy access to the icehouse situated under an attached work shop. A pig sty and hen house on the far side of a woodshed, at right angles to the shop, guaranteed that swine and poultry would be near at hand to be fed the excess skim milk or whey from the dairy and could be reached without going completely outside.

Mrs. Case went beyond the accepted areas of women’s work and included a plan for the barn, which had stanchions for a dozen cows on a lower level and for three horses on the ground floor. Although many New England writers were encouraging the use of attached barns at that time, her plan had the stable and part of the carriage house as lean-tos on the back of the barn, necessitating a driveway between it and the hennerly. The artist who did the rendering for the publisher made his drawing somewhat misleading by omitting the lean-to portions, although he clearly suggested space between the buildings.

The artist also neglected to include the chimney needed for a boiler in the piggery. That boiler, permitting the pigs’ meal to be cooked in a location well removed from the dairy and the household food preparation, represented but one of the conveniences planned for the Case model farm. Screened doors were on the dairy, and pumps for both hard and soft

water in a small room off the kitchen room indicate that the house cellar was to have a cistern to match that in the barn. The kitchen was equipped with a cookstove, but also contained an old-style brick oven, while another small stove or boiler heated water for the dairy. No mention was made of heating the house, but two additional chimneys without fireplaces suggest the option of stoves in the front rooms.

The inclusion in the house of a “nursery” which could not be reached directly from the kitchen may be due to the extended nature of the Case family, where both Isaac’s mother and his sister were at hand to share all types of work. Pamela had two children. A daughter, Nellie, arrived the September following their marriage, and a son, another Isaac, was born nearly four years later, around the time her plan was accepted for publication. It seems likely that, had she been solely responsible for all cooking and dairy chores, in addition to caring for the children, a connecting doorway might have been included.

Apparently the “Model Farm Buildings” were never built,<sup>7</sup> as the Civil War intervened and brought major changes to the Case family. Isaac W. Case volunteered for army service and died in Louisiana in 1863. Within two years, Dr. Case’s failing health led to the sale of the farm. He, his wife, and daughter were all dead by 1866. Pamela went to stay with her parents briefly, but then returned to Kenduskeag to buy the small Greek Revival house in which she lived until her own death in 1911. The house’s location next to

the school, combined with the presence of a teenaged boarder in her household in the 1880 census, suggests that she may have supplemented her war widow's pension by boarding an occasional student.

Pamelia Case's foray into publishing earned no lasting local fame, not engendering enough family pride for the daughter to mention it in her memoir. Indeed, the Case Memorial Library in Kenduskeag, given by Nellie Case Rust in memory of her family, has little record of Pamelia. Nevertheless, her plans show one Maine woman in step with home-designing trends in other parts of the nation.

Joyce K. Bibber

### NOTES

1. Sally McMurry, *Families and Farmhouses in Nineteenth Century America*, New York, 1988, Chapters 3, 4.
2. Pamelia's birth is noted as "Pamela" in a card file at Bangor City Hall, although not included in the register of births there. Her family is documented in Arthur Gilman, *The Gilman Family*, Albany, pp. 184 and 204. For Stephen see *ibid.*, also James H. Mundy and Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., *The Flight of the Grand Eagle: Charles G. Bryant, Maine Architect and Adventurer*, Augusta, 1977, pp. 6-8, 49, and 63.
3. Deborah Thompson, *Bangor, Maine, 1769-1914: An Architectural History*, Orono, 1988, pp. 199-200.
4. December 23, 1852. Recorded at Bangor City Hall.

5. *A General Catalog of the Alumni of Bowdoin College and the Maine Medical School, 1794-1912*, Brunswick, 1912; memoir by Nellie Case Rust in Erma Winters, *A History of Kenduskeag, Maine*, Kenduskeag, 1966, p. 74.
6. Stephen Goodale, ed., *Abstract of Returns from the Agricultural Societies of Maine, 1857*, Augusta, 1858, frontispiece and pp. 36-38.
7. A builder would have problems, as the second floor is not the right size to fit above the first; and it is difficult to envision how a shed chamber, mentioned in the text, would not block the windows of the two large rear chambers - one of which would have to contain the upper part of the kitchen chimney!

### LIST OF KNOWN COMMISSIONS IN MAINE BY PAMELIA A. CASE

"Model Farm Buildings for a Maine Farmer," 1858, proposed elevation and floor plan

Volume 7, 1995

Published by Maine Citizens for Historic Preservation  
Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Editor  
Roger G. Reed, Associate Editor